

THE TWO STANDARDS

THE MYSTIC'S ATTITUDE TO WAR

(MAY 1915)

The infiltration of the Kingdom of God into the kingdoms of this world—by which are meant, not the various political nations, but the ideals, mental concepts, and standards of conduct actuating humanity at large—makes assured but almost imperceptibly gradual progress. Progress there is in individuals who outstrip the general mass in spiritual development, but among the mass itself the transformative progress is slow, and for two reasons. Firstly, in the execution of Eternal Designs, time—which is time only for us of this world—is of no account, notwithstanding that there are times and seasons for their fulfilment. On the plane of Divine Mind, of the Eternal Now, design and its fulfilment are simultaneous facts; no interval occurs between the thought and its accomplishment. On that of the human mind, by whose limitations that Now is split up into a time-sequence of past, present, and future, the execution of Eternal Design also appears broken up into a succession of historic evolutionary events, pervading which, however, is discernible an intention accomplishing itself, through ups and downs, good and evil, war and peace, without haste but without rest. A *Fiat* spoken in the timeless world of the overruling causative Spirit takes ages before its vibrations become exhausted in this dense, irresponsive outer world of effects, the opposing wills of which It is bent upon suffusing, transmuting, and conforming into harmony with Itself; the sweep of an archangel's wing *there* may manifest *here* as a long sequence of historical events; a single blast from a celestial trumpet, blown

to startle the sleepy minds of men out of lethargy, instils into them suggestions that mature as accepted truth only after years of tentative consideration and philosophising.

And secondly, humanity has so much to learn, and does it but so slowly and painfully, before it can acquire the Divine point of view; and has so much of its own devices to unlearn before attaining the simplicity and childlike *naïveté* of mind requisite even for conceiving the nature of the Kingdom of God, let alone for consciously "entering" it. And the necessary learning, of course, implies much more than formulating intellectual concepts and enunciating doctrine about the Kingdom; the education is one that must so completely possess one's being and actuate one's conduct that to know the laws of the Kingdom and to do them are inseparable. From the Christian revelation the Western world already knows the laws and has been told something of the nature of the Kingdom of God. That its conduct does not keep pace with its available information needs no argument. It prefers to rely upon its own standard—that of its natural reason and judgment. And all the time a contrary, a higher, standard is being offered for its acceptance; a Divine Idea, transcending the primary conceptions we form, is ever enticing the human mind away from its own standard towards a loftier one.

Take an example. Once the ideal life of the then very limited European civilisation, that of the Greeks—a perfectly worthy ideal and one marking an essential educational stage of the developing consciousness of the race—was one of perfect bodily form and grace combined with a serene mental poise capable, like their Olympian deities, of transcending the dualism of good and evil and of sensuously enjoying the dregless wine of a blissful harmonious life. The conception was lofty; it was an imperfect, premature effort to realise the Christian idea of the sublimation and divinisation of our natural humanity, and its attempted accomplishment involved as severe discipline of the grosser nature and purification of the passions as is found needful by the Christian aspirant to reintegration into the Divine likeness.

Yet because of factors which had been overlooked the Greek ideal failed. Supplementing its partial truth, and succeeding it immediately in order of historic time, there was offered to the human imagination a quite opposite picture, a sharply antithetical ideal; one offensive, unintelligible, to men's natural judgment, and, as St Paul said of it, "to the Greeks foolishness." In complete contrast to the Greek conception, it had no outward form or comeliness whatever; no beauty, as they conceived of beauty, that it should be desired. It suggested, however, that there existed an order of beauty of which they had no consciousness, a beauty incident to an inner and not to an outer life and world. It told them that the outward perfection they rightly aspired after was dependent for its foundation upon an inward something, without which nothing external mattered or was durable at all. It told them also that this inward perfection was attainable only by a willing reversal and renouncement of one's first-hand ideas of what is good, true, beautiful, desirable; by a self-submission to a transformation of one's life, ideas, and conduct from the natural to an ultra-natural standard, a transition that came to be spoken of symbolically as a crucifixion, as "the death of the cross." The contrast is forcibly brought out in a passage in the well-known mystical romance *John Inglesant*:

"They (Inglesant and the Roman Cardinal) were standing before the Apollo in the Belvedere Gardens. Inglesant took from beneath his vest a crucifix in ivory, exquisitely carved, and held it beside the statue of the god. The one the noblest product of buoyant life, the proudest perfection of human form, purified from the dross of all humanity, the head worthy of the god of day and of the lyre, of healing and of help, who bore in his day the self-same name that the other bore—'the Great Physician.' The other, worn and emaciated, helpless, dying apparently without power, forgotten by the world."

Such was one of humanity's object-lessons, and not even yet has it been learned. Let us look at another. The formulation of the Greek ideal was favoured by the environment of the Greeks, by the benignant climate and natural beauty of their land and by their intellectual relations to the thought of adjacent countries. In the

sterner environment of northern Europe, however, a different ideal, coloured also by local conditions, sprang up. There, not the enchantment of genial landscapes beguiled the mind and stimulated it to the gracious artistic and religious expressions of the Greeks. There, among bitter winds, bleak uplands and tempestuous icy seas, the dominant note suggested by rugged Nature and her elemental energies was that of force. Wherefore, it was reasoned, man to become godlike must assimilate and manifest forcefulness, must become violent, ruthless, relentless as the Power that so expressed itself through Nature. The modern Nietzsche, in whose philosophic rhapsodies the Greek and Norse ideals are interblended, perpetuates exactly the thought of the primitive Norseman when he declares the universe to be but a "will to power" and bids his disciples: "Why so soft, so tender, so conciliatory? If your hardness cannot shine forth and cut and crush, how can you hope to create? All creators are hard. That alone which is hardest is also the noblest. This new Table, O my brethren, I write above you: Become hard!"

Now in this perception, as in that of the Greeks, was discerned a truth; a truth which nevertheless was untrue because but partial and seen out of relation to other factors essential to an adequate philosophy. The universe, as Nietzsche affirms, is a "will to power." But it is a will to much besides; a will to something of which power is only one ingredient, to something in which power stands arrested, balanced, and tempered by factors restraining the relentless manifestation of what would otherwise be but brute mechanical energy. Nietzsche, before concluding the universe to be a "will to power" only, would have been wise to have recalled some very simple and familiar words:—"For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,"—which inculcate that, in the cosmic goal or kingdom, power and glory—that is, severity and mercy, wrath (or force) and love—stand in eternal and perfect balance, whilst his "new commandment" to "become hard," reminiscent of the apostolic "Quit you like men; be

strong!" lacks the qualifying words that set so wide a difference between the two doctrines—"let all your things be done *with love*."

And in time it came about that, just as the Greek concept of beauty was countered by a competing complementary one, so Thor's hammer was contrasted with Christ's cross; the primitive Norse ideal of forcefulness was confronted with a contrary standard of gentleness and tenderness which, if cultivated, would have been found indued with a peculiar and more effective force of their own. But, as we see to-day, that lesson has not yet been learned; the check has proved but temporary, so fiercely and stubbornly does the human mind—and the invisible powers of the air that dominate it—resent the "foolishness" of the Christ-standard. "Christianity (wrote Heine, years ago) has in some degree softened, but it could not destroy, that brutal German joy of battle. When once the taming talisman, the Cross, breaks in two, the savagery of the old fighters will gush up anew. That talisman is decayed, and the day will come when it will piteously collapse. Then Thor, with his giant's hammer, will at last spring up, and shatter to bits the Gothic cathedrals." The prediction has become verified. The modern Teutonic mind, suddenly recanting every Christian principle, has reverted to the spirit and methods of its barbaric ancestry and to-day, through all its princes, professors, philosophers, and theologians, is once more exclaiming:

Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it.
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant.
Over the whole earth
Still it is Thor's day!
Thou art a God too,
O Galilean!
And thus single-handed
Unto the conflict,
Gauntlet or Gospel,
Here I defy thee!¹

¹ Longfellow, *Legend of King Olaf*.

"Gauntlet or Gospel," "mailed fist" or unresisting nail-pierced hand; the super-state of German militarism or the Kingdom of God; the super-man bred by eugenics and intensive culture and trained upon the lines of Nietzschean doctrine, or the super-man of that regenerate race of which the Christian Master was the first-fruits,—as a struggle between these alternatives may the present world-war be summed up; and hence the crucial and cosmic nature of this present conflict between the Christ and the anti-Christ standards.

The two standards, then, that of the kingdoms of this world and the natural reason which prevails therein, and that of the Kingdom of God and the mystical consciousness, are entirely contrary one to the other. As our examples have shown, each high conception of the natural mind comes to be undercut and surpassed by a loftier one offered by the Christ-law. To use biblical imagery of this fact, the temple of the human mind is constantly being destroyed that a better one may be reared upon its site. "First that which is natural; afterwards that which is spiritual"; "He taketh away the first that *He* (not we ourselves) may establish the second,"—that is the way the Divine Educator ever proceeds; "And the glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former." Sensuous form and beauty are contrasted with a formless and non-sensuous beauty greater still. Brute violence is juxtaposed by the more effectual potency of gentleness and love. Zeus by the Greek, as Jupiter by the Romans, was imagined as lord of the lightning which his displeasure hurled from the skies upon offending mortals; Jesus seizes the idea and improves upon it; it is "as lightning" that He too likened the merciful flashing of the Son of Man through the human soul. Thor had his hammer, so Christ too comes with His—one stronger than Thor's, though its noiseless persistent tapping is heard only in the silence where He stands at the door of the heart and knocks. "Is not My word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"¹

Because the present crisis is, in its inwardness, a

¹ Jer. xxiii. 29.

terrific struggle for the supremacy upon this earth of the Christ-law over our primary instincts and anti-christian human reason and the unseen powers that dominate them, it has provoked—doubtless it was intended to provoke—in numberless minds a perplexity originating in the very conflict of standards of which we are speaking. As one's private knowledge, the pages of the press, and public utterances from our pulpits, indicate, how many consciences are being stirred to-day to reflect upon the rightness or wrongness of war; upon the problem, specially urgent among ministers of religion, of the personal duty of entering the lists or abstaining from so doing; upon the right attitude of mind towards our national enemies; and upon the proper direction of thought and prayer in regard to victory and the ultimate outcome? Now this perplexity could never arise at all had we made the transition we are called upon to make from the standard of this world to that of the Kingdom of God. Until the latter standard is attained, until it has taken possession of the personal life as completely as the former one now dominates it, we are all "under the law"; we are in bondage to powers beyond our control and are the sport of certain cosmic forces. Especially are we controlled by that very potent "kingdom of this world," the collective mind or national "group-soul" of our country, with which at birth we each become psychically affiliated, which colours our thought, influences our collective conduct, inspires our patriotic sense and prejudices, and in an emergency like this consolidates the units of a nation into a uniformly thinking and acting whole. And we see the peril of such a domination to-day. For should the common group-soul of a given people chance—as is the case with our present chief enemy—to have become infested and devil-driven by a strong spirit of evil desperately bent upon resisting the nearer approach of the Kingdom of God into the kingdoms of this world, over which that spirit has so long exercised authority, then one may expect to find perpetrated the otherwise inexplicable fiendish malignities and diabolic inhumanities

which, for our painful instruction, we are called upon to endure or to contemplate at the hands of our brother-men to-day.

The collective mind and conscience of our own nation—a medley of good and evil like that of our enemy—has compelled us into warfare. It is idle to ask whether or no we were right in entering it. Save by shameful dishonour to our own soul we could not otherwise in our present spiritual—or unspiritual—national condition, which is one of bondage to law rather than of that liberty of the spirit which alone enables a man or a nation successfully to apply the Christ-law of non-resistance of evil. And here, then, we are, not masters of ourselves or of circumstance, but servants, children, “under the law.” And the children of this world, we are told, are wise “according to their generation,” that is according to the degree of their present limited development, and no condemnation has ever been spoken by the Master against their discharging what to them is the plain conscientious duty of fulfilling the highest ideal they for the moment see and are capable of, in conflict even though it be against the higher Christ-law. In doing so they are “rods of Mine anger,” executive instruments of the Divine energies in promoting cosmic ends, and as such they may—as they are doing to-day—display a sacred fervour and truly mystical zeal for a righteous cause and even stand in a laudable detachment of soul from the physical violence and horrors they reluctantly undertake. Written above them, nevertheless, stands a higher law which humanity has yet to learn, and is learning apparently—as so often happens in the education of the human spirit—by intimate contact with and experience of the very evil it is called upon to outgrow; a law which says: Love your enemies; Resist not evil; If thine enemy smite thee—. And reading it, the natural reason is at once confronted with a crux—indeed with *the* Crux. How impossible, wrong, and unreasonable, it argues, would it be to observe that doctrine at the present moment! And, for them, it *is* right, good, and proper to obey the highest dictates of honour, morality,

patriotism, and national righteousness; for them it *would* be foolish, suicidal, inimical to the best human interests of the moment not to resist present evil, not to dispute alien tyranny in this crisis; it *would* be shameful if our manhood ignored the “call of the blood,” the promptings of national conscience at such a juncture; and nothing here written is intended to carry a contrary implication or to advocate an unworthy pacificism. Those, whether friend or foe, obedient to these impulses still remain within the loving protection of enduring Providence. Over them all still watches impartially the Divine Father, inspiring such ideals as are true and good; and (as Kipling, with sure vision of the dual nature of the Divine Parenthood, once wrote) over them all still broods the Eternal Mother, consolatrix of every shattered hope, the soother of agonies, and ultimate wiper away of tears.

Thou art the Voice to kingly boys
To steel them to the fight,
And Comfortress of un-success
To give the dead good-night.

And according to their faith and their works, their sacrifice and their devotion in this struggle, so will their reward be; nor, when their present part in the Eternal Design is played out, will opportunity lack, in this or some other storey of the many-mansioned house of life, for their eyes to open to a law higher than they can yet follow and to the recognition of some of their own brethren who even now follow it, but whom, for so doing, they are likely to account for foolishness.

For these last—they are not a multitude, but great ideals are ever testified to by a few, sometimes by but one—have become children of another kingdom; obey another rule of life. They have advanced from beneath the rule of “law” into the liberty of “grace.” Their life, and not merely their eyes and fingers, has turned that so significant page which divides the Old Testament, which ordains warfare and resistance of evil, from the New, which forbids them. They have outgrown the compulsions of temporal circumstance, the

influences of geographical patriotism and national ideals, good and great upon their appropriate plane of consciousness as these may be. They are no longer in psychical bondage to the national group-soul. They behold not this country or that, but humanity as one whole, and they see strife between them as a crisis affecting the entirety. They are silent when others clamour, for wisdom does not strive or cry in the streets. They love where others hate, or take to themselves weapons of hate. To them the incidence of victory this way or that, save as it makes for universal righteousness, is of no account; however it fall out, they know God's will is being done and is shaping things to larger, sweeter ends. To them there is no problem of the right or wrong of warfare; strife is simply not their business, has passed out of their horizon and plan of life. And this from no lack of manliness, from cowardice, or any priggish moral superiority, but because the restraining grip of the kingdom of abiding peace in which their minds are stayed has as effectually paralysed their nature from participating in strife as that of their brethren has been stimulated to patriotic service by the prompting of the collective mind in which they are integrated. Far from being callous or indifferent, as they might be judged, to the occurrences of the time, they are far more sensitive to the welter of suffering and iniquity than are the obtuser natures around them. "Be not anxious for your life" is one of their maxims, for they know that whosoever loses his life for the Christ-ideal shall find it. And so they would rather be killed than kill, and in their own killing would see the presence of the Divine hand and welcome it. "A messenger has come to me from The Beloved," exclaimed—as how many of us could do?—an Eastern mystic when fatally stung by a cobra. "And thou also art He!" cried another who with those words broke the silence of prolonged meditation upon the universality of the Divine Presence when, at the siege of Delhi, bayoneted by a British soldier. And, though for the majority such things as warfare and hatred must needs be in the present state of cosmic outworking,

this smaller class knows the supreme folly of them; knows too that folly far enough persisted in will lead to wisdom, and that the very stress of hate and attrition of conflict will eventually destroy the illusive veils now separating human soul from human soul and will kindle between foes that spark of love-light, the flame of which will at last disclose to their strife-weary eyes the secret of their underlying essential identity.

For my enemy is dead; a man divine as myself is dead.
I look where he lies whitefaced and still in the coffin. I draw
near,
Bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the
coffin.

So they can afford to wait; can afford, if needs be, to be derided whilst they stand apart, testifying to another standard, a higher law. But do not account these "fools in Christ" inactive, idle, indifferent to what is occurring. Their energies, unapparent in this world, have been transferred from the sphere of outer to one of interior activity, to the plane where faith "moves mountains" and where far greater mundane consequences are accomplished by the intense and potent spiritual energy of a few obscure souls than are possible to hosts of army corps. "Peradventure ten just men shall save the city"; but those ten will be men of the mystical life; patriots no longer of any earthly nation but of the kingdom of heaven.

From one leading that life there recently reached me the following letter; a duplicate of it being sent at the same time to one of the leading religious journals of this country, which, as was expected, has not published sentiments so contrary to the popular standard even in religious quarters:

"A celebrated London divine the other day said from his pulpit: 'I shall not hesitate to pray for victory,' etc. Now prayer to be of any value must spring from a right understanding. The prayer that God will bless will be one in which the attitude of the soul praying is the desire that the enemy's eyes may be opened to the truth, for then the war must cease, and the prayer would be breathing love to our enemy and blessing him, instead of confounding him by our victory.

"Pray for the light of the Holy Spirit to enfold Germany and especially the Kaiser, who needs the prayers of the faithful more than most. 'Let thy hope in thy brother be deathless,'—yes, even in the Kaiser.

"Concerning fighting; never forget the words of Jesus Christ. 'My kingdom is *not* of this world; if My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight.' The men of the world will fight with the world, but those who are called of God, who have come into the realisation that they are of Spirit and are His servants, must not descend from the Spirit-realm to battle with men of the earth. Pray that the Light may dawn in the hearts of men, but keep in that powerful sphere—Spirit—continually. On realising that we are Spirit, a part of God, we must remain in that atmosphere if we desire to live in the Spirit; for to come out of it is to suffer as a fish when taken out of the water.

"Prayer is powerful. Then those who know how to pray aright should hold to their vocation if they love humanity, for they can do more by the power of prayer than with powder.

"Is this a righteous war? some ask. He who is absolutely withdrawn with the Christ is not concerned in this question in the very least. All that concerns him is to live up to the light that God gives him and to draw his brother onward and upward to that place of Spirit which he has found. This is *all* the Christian is called upon to do. He is not required to condemn his brother or other nations, but to live in harmony with God and be a saviour to his fellow-men by living the life Jesus has taught him by His Spirit."

To many these views will come as a startling new idea. To others they will be offensive or absurd; their reasoning unintelligible. They forget that the standard of the Kingdom of God is the opposite of that of our primary natural reason, to which it is promised that it will prove a rock of offence. And indeed its true reasonableness will be appreciable only by such as have been content to crucify their natural reason and to permit a faculty higher than it to arise within them, a faculty which has awakened their consciousness to another order of being, another quality of life, than the surface-mind of the natural man of this world reckons of. The latter feels he *must* resist evil and fight; that it is in the cause of humanity, righteousness, and God that he does so. So, too, reasoned the disciple who, in his Master's supposed interests, seized a sword and smote off the servant's ear. At once the Master seized the occasion to counter the natural impulse

and demonstrate the higher law. By casting away the sword and restoring the ear His action said: Harm not him whose ear has harkened, hitherto but outwardly, to false natural counsel persuading to strife; for there shall yet be given him another ear with which he shall hear inwardly a higher counsel than yet he knows of, that of the still small voice of which the name is "Counsellor,"¹ and "Prince of Peace." So be restored to her the ear of the servant Germany!

The mystics alone, of whatever time and country, have known and followed this higher law, for only those whose consciousness has grown to mystical stature can truly know and follow it. "Self-defence for the ordinary citizen; no reaction for Sanyasins" (spiritual disciples), said a modern Vedantist when explaining the doctrine of non-resistance as taught in the East. The words and life of our Lord revealed and practically exemplified it for the West, but Christendom, whilst ascribing a nominal assent to it, has never yet, for all its churches and theologising, so learned it that it could apply the precept to practice. Its conduct, in this and in all matters of national and personal ethics, has been a compromise between the Christ-standard and that of the natural reason, and so has courted the destiny pronounced upon every kingdom divided against itself—it "cannot stand," has no stability, and must fall, as the religion, politics, and sociology of Europe are falling into disintegration to-day. War has come to chasten, to purify and reconstruct, to clear the air, to give us another chance, to lead back the recalcitrant to the wisdom of the just. And hence the need for the mystic's testimony upon this matter to-day, unpopular as it may be. That nations or the public mind will suddenly leap *en masse* from the natural standard

¹ It is very noteworthy that the great symbolist of the fourth Gospel has ascribed the Isaian Christ-name "Counsellor" (Isa. ix. 6) to the servant whose ear was temporarily severed and restored. "The servant's name was Malchus" (Μαλχος, Counsellor), a detail quite superfluous to the outward story of the Passion, but of great significance to the inward one, since it implies that our natural humanity, the "servant" of the Spirit, is but so much potential Christ and bears the same mystical name.

to grasping a mystical truth and performing the higher law is not to be expected, but the present crisis and the readjustment of national and international conditions that will follow it will greatly facilitate and expedite a change to which sooner or later we must all come. By no one is such a transition made in a moment, easily, or without pain, for to make it brings one into immediate contact with that basal Fact upon which the world is built and our own souls are being slowly shaped into the Divine image—the Cross, to pass which involves the surrender of that in us which is natural, the negation of all our primary conceptions and criteria; and that Cross it is which divides the children of this world from the children of light. We have spoken here solely of the problem of duty in regard to warfare and non-resistance, since current events have emphasised that point particularly. But the principle determining that problem goes, of course, much farther and covers every phase of personal and national conduct. And by the test of it each of us to-day is being called upon to judge for himself upon which side of the Cross he stands; the side that overshadows the kingdoms of this world, the side that is seen as darkness and confusion, whose manifesting comes upon us in the form of war and hate, and whose touch is bitter pain; or the side which illumines the kingdom of heaven and beatifies those that even in this life walk therein. Only these latter—fools, of course, to this world, because no longer ruled by its standards—can *fulfil* the higher law. Others, like nominal Christendom these twenty centuries, hear it with their ears, approve it as an impracticable counsel of perfection, but declining the self-renouncement it involves are content to follow a poor second-best; and so, when the test comes, power to perform what they know and approve to be good is paralysed; they find themselves in psychical bondage to the standards of this world and must perforce serve their chosen taskmasters. In a word, the higher law, the precepts of that—to the natural mind—unworkable paradox, the Sermon on the Mount, can be practised only by those who are themselves upon that “Mount,” whose

consciousness enlarged by self-renouncement, liberated by suffering, or quickened by the illuminative grace of God, has ascended to and habitually lives upon a plane of being higher than the natural mentality can know. Those whose minds are kept adjusted only to the valleys beneath, deny, deride, fail to understand, and—for the present—follow a standard and a law of their own.

Yet, for such, this is a time both of instruction and of great hope, even amid so great miseries. For the valleys, it is promised, shall be exalted and every high place brought low, to the intent that between the depths and the heights there may be reconciliation and union. And even now it seems that this mystic mingling of earth and heaven is passing into accomplishment in the consciousness of many. Many upon the lower levels are to-day straining upwards for larger vision and fuller life; for greater liberty of spirit and richer nourishment than the standards of this world permit to them; towards them many others—some few in the flesh and myriad multitudes beyond it—are stooping down to encourage and to exalt their younger aspiring brethren, are cleansing and tincturing the very thought-atmosphere of this murky world with brighter ideals and planting in many unsuspecting minds the seed of a new order of things. As at the dawn of our era, so now at this threshold of a larger Christ-coming, the official religious oracles are strangely impotent and dumb. But other voices there are, speaking to-day in a strain and a spirit never hitherto heard among us; small voices as from the heights, like harbingers of spring, obscure and hardly to be heard, yet testifying that the authentic Christ-spirit is at last speaking to men through men, and that, in a larger Incarnation than we have been wont to think of, the Kingdom of Heaven is indeed at hand and among us. They are the voices of mystics, of some who have been upon the “Mount” and have undergone a regenerative change which has transformed their nature, cleansed their speech, and veritably “put a new song in their mouths.” Perhaps even from among the pages of this modest journal—the aim of which is to provide them some

channel of expression and to increase their range of utterance—some echoes of that “new song” will from time to time be caught; those will be dull ears that fail to recognise its tone and temper. At this springtide of a year likely long to be memorable as one of many sorrows, it is especially fitting that it should be heard; yes, heard as they tell us skylarks are being heard carolling above the roar and shambles of the fighting-line in France. For those who listen, for those who love and watch the effects of love, for those sensitive and attuned to the strong undercurrents of life now pulsing beneath the troubled surface of these desperate days, the signs of an approaching new birth within the heart and consciousness of humanity are as manifest and promiseful as those of reviving Nature in the outer world. It was a listening mystic—the “madman” William Blake—who sang surely the most glorious of all spring-tide anthems; yet his song declared a larger truth than he intended if we think of it as telling of the present quickening thrills into this earth of ours of the Day-spring from on high, of the closer coming of the mild light of the Kingdom of God into the war and pain-torn atmosphere of the kingdoms of this world.

The hills tell each other, and the list'ning
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to Thy bright pavilions; issue forth
And let Thy holy feet visit our clime.

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our feet
Kiss Thy perfumèd garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter Thy pearls
Upon our love-sick land that mourns for Thee.

O deck her forth with Thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languish'd head
Whose modest tresses were bound up for Thee.